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ABSTRACT

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The Novel in Educational Research: The Rhythm of the Land and Its People

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ABSTRACT

Regional novels constitute an important component for research in rural education because they deal with relationships between people and place and with the impact of schooling on human life. Selected incidents from Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird (1960) and LaFarge's Laughing Boy (1929) are congruent with contemporary research findings in terms of (1) relations between language and culture, (2) cultural mores of the land and the family, and (3) relations between schooling and community. Discussion includes ways of utilizing regional novels in the graduate and undergraduate classrooms, directions for future research, and relationships between artistic and scientific approaches to educational research.

The Novel in Educational Research:
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Language and culture are interrelated. So states the first part of the Whorfian Hypothesis, demonstrated empirically by Brown and Lenneberg (1954). Part of the significance of the Whorfian Hypothesis is that the relationships between language and culture govern how a people view the world, address one another, and refer to things about them. When education flows with Whorf's Thesis the results are predictably harmonious, but when education flows against Whorf's Thesis the results are just as predictably dissonant. The history of rural education in the United States coincides with the history of Native American education in a rural setting. In both instances the imposition of one world view on another resulted in dissonance, dislocatedness, and tragedy.

Whatever else a novelist may do by way of characterization, the writer must take into account the language and culture of the characters he/she creates. A detail awry in the setting or a phrase askew in the dialogue can so wrench readers that they suspend belief and say, "No! That is not the way it is." Thus novels, especially regional novels, must successfully accomplish two tasks: they must depict the human condition accurately and they must produce in and for readers that precision of place and dialect which comes from the writer's having developed a good eye for locale and custom and a good ear for localisms in speech.

My thesis is that regional novels such as Harper Lee's To Kill a Mocking-bird (1960) and Oliver LaFarge's Laughing Boy (1929) constitute an important component in the study of rural education because they accurately portray the relationship between people and place and because they consider the impact of schooling on human life. Researchers in rural education repeatedly stress the

importance of regionalism, its diversity and pluralism, in definitions of rurality (e.g., Sher, 1977) and of the close relationships between rural people, including Native Americans, and their land and community. These same researchers also repeatedly stress the arrogance of imposing one view of education (the urban) upon the schools in a rural setting vis a vis centralization, consolidation, and standardization. Moreover, social scientist Robert Coles (1977) points out that regional novelists such as Faulkner, Ellison, and Momaday nearly always perceive various rural peoples to possess character, independence, dignity, resourcefulness, a closeness to the land, and a respect for life's tragedies. Consequently, when regional novels address virtually the same concerns as research investigations, the worth of these novels cannot and should not be undervalued.

After briefly summarizing the storylines of the two novels under consideration, I shall select incidents which typify the novels and compare and contrast the novels with each other and with pertinent research in terms of language, the land and the family, and schooling.[1] The results of this analysis show that the concepts dramatized in the novels parallel the concepts derived from scientific investigation. This parallelism emanates from the combined perspectives of the humanities and the sciences to produce an alternative methodology for research in rural education (see Pettibone, 1981). As well, the parallelism points up the importance of utilizing an artistic approach to qualitative analysis in order to arrive at what Eisner (1981) calls "binocular vision" by which he means that squinting through one eye never did produce much depth.

To Kill a Mockingbird (hereafter, Mockingbird): Set in the fictive town and county of Maycomb in lower Alabama during the mid-1930s, Harper Lee's novel is ostensibly a story of the Finch family told by its youngest member, Jean Louise or "Scout," about her father Atticus, a lawyer and state legislator,

and her older brother Jeremy or "Jem." The novel's plot is made up of two intricately related trials. The first takes place in the fifth judicial circuit court where Atticus unsuccessfully defends a black man who is wrongfully convicted of raping a white woman named Mayella Ewell. The second trial is that of prejudice toward the Finch family in the events leading to and emanating from the court trial. The story ends with Mayella's father seeking vengeance on Atticus for shaming the Ewell family. The man accosts Jem and Scout on their way home from a community event, but recluse Arthur "Boo" Radley saves their lives and kills the elder Ewell in the process.

Throughout the novel, however, the reader learns not only about the close relationships among rural people, but also about the details of rural education in the Deep South during the Depression years. What emerges is an accurate portrait of one rural region in which formal schooling tends to impede one's education.

Laughing Boy: Set in the vast, contrasting, and almost metaphysical reaches of western New Mexico, Oliver LaFarge's novel is a simple tale told in the classical tragic tradition. Its plot, however - boy meets girl, boy gets girl, boy loses girl - conveys almost nothing of what actually happens in the novel. The tale is told from two points of view, that of the protagonist, Laughing Boy, and that of his beloved, Slim Girl. He is "of the People," a Navajo who speaks virtually no English; she is also a Navajo, but, because she has attended boarding school and so speaks English, she is no longer regarded as being of the People. Laughing Boy and Slim Girl's story is one of their learning to live together and of his attempt to help restore her to the ways of the People. The tale ends tragically. Slim Girl is shot and killed. After administering her death rites, Laughing Boy finds peace when past and present come together and regains the Trail of Beauty. In all, the novel depicts the clash of culture on culture.

Throughout the novel the reader learns something not only of the Navajo culture, its kinship system and its language, but also of Indian education. What emerges is an accurate dramatization of outside Anglo attempts to make over or "civilize" another culture to its own image in ways that do not fit.

The Language

A Linguistic Analysis: One way to understand that language and culture are interrelated is to perform a simplified linguistic analysis. Such an analysis begins by counting dependent variables (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives). Which variables to count are listed in J.B. Carroll's "Vectors of Prose Style" (in Sebeok, 1966, pp. 282-292). These variables link up in special ways to the world they depict. For example, a verb-adjective ratio indicates how emotionally intent a writer or speaker is toward getting the message across (Osgood, in Sebeok, pp. 293-306). The relative number of nouns, of verbs, and of words in a sentence tells whether a writer has a nominal or a verbal style (Wells, in Sebeok, pp. 211-220). The commonly used type-token ratio, which enumerates how many different words (the type) are contained in a passage of speech (the token), indicates the relative size of the word stock (vocabulary) a speaker or writer has at his/her disposal. And the number of personal pronouns describes something of how the user perceives interpersonal relationships (Friedrichs, 1966).

By analyzing a passage of prose from each of the two novels, passages which are similar in content and structure, one sees similarities and differences between the two novelists (see Table 1). Each passage is comprised of two paragraphs describing a place: the paragraphs from To Kill A Mockingbird (p. 11) describe the village of Maycomb,

and the paragraphs from Laughing Boy (p. 113) describe the protagonist's cornfield.

TABLE 1

A Comparative Analysis of Two Novelists' Styles

Variables	Mockingbird	Laughing Boy
Total number of words	189	205
Average number of words per sentence	18.9	25.6
Number of nouns	50	38
Number of verb constructs	28	30
Number of adjectives	16	27
Verb-adjective ratio	1.64	1.11
Type-token ratio	.69	.69
Number of personal pronouns	11 (all 3rd person)	12 (all 3rd person)

Although the casual observer might expect both authors to exhibit similarities since both are writing in English, the data in Table 1 indicate that the novelists are also different. For example, although both authors write descriptive passages of similar length (total number words), encode their thoughts from a similar-sized vocabulary (type/token ratio), employ approximately the same number of verb constructs, and show a similar regard for interpersonal relationships (number or personal pronouns), they are different in the average number or words in a sentence, the number of nouns used and verb-adjective ratios. Harper Lee uses fewer words to a sentence, which tends to make her style verbal and active; yet she also uses more nouns.

Since the English Language is one in which the native speaker reflects a need to control the environment (typified by relatively short, action-verb sentences) and since English is also a Germanic language which places emphasis on naming (typified by being "nouny"), Lee's style is characteristically English. By contrast, LaFarge use fewer nouns and longer sentences. Athabascan languages, of which Navajo is one, are verb-centered (i.e., they are not so "nouny." See Case, 1971), and thus one would expect fewer nouns and relatively more verbs because LaFarge attempts, as he says in the novel's introduction, to be true to the general spirit of the Navajo customs and culture. His longer sentences are indicative of the Navajo life style which is to live passively, being controlled by but in harmony with Nature. Lee's verb-adjective ratio is slightly higher than LaFarge's; she is thus more actively intent on getting her message across to the reader.

On the Importance of Language: Basic to the success of the two novels is the application of language to dramatic events. Harper Lee employs the dialects of speech groups within the Southern culture - the country or farming folks, the "Negroes," the "poh white trash," and the townsfolk. Oliver LaFarge utilizes Navajo phrases (e.g., hozoji, meaning toward perfection, beauty, oneness with Nature), alters English syntax to suggest Navajo syntax, and explains not only the differences between Navajo and English but also why those differences are important. Thus Harper Lee dramatizes, by narration, the dialects of one language, whereas LaFarge explains, by exposition and approximation, the significance of the contrast between two languages. To put it another way, the language of Mockingbird is ancillary to the story; the language of Laughing Boy is integral. This is an important

distinction because it is far less difficult to learn a dialect of one's own language than it is to learn another language, especially when that language is not of the IndoEuropean family of languages.[2]

Harper Lee, then, liberally sprinkles her prose with dialect: "saying Hey" (to say Hello to) by nearly all Southerners, "sirup-soppin'" (to pour sirup over the big meal of the day) by the country folk, "linin'" (the way a black church congregation sings a hymn), scavenging a "chiffarobe" (a piece of furniture) and "chunkin'" (to throw down or away) by the "poh white trash." The effect of using the dialect is that the reader is led to believe he/she is there, within the novel, hearing people talk as they do talk in that region. The dialect lends credulity to the novel's characters; it helps the plot but does not advance it to any great extent. Use of the dialect simply fulfills reader expectations.

By contrast, considerations of language in Laughing Boy are explanatory because the novel is concerned with two separate cultures, American and Navajo,[3] rather than with subgroups of one single culture. LaFarge provides the reader with several illustrations which contrast the two languages, including: (1) when Navajos express thanks (they don't, except for very great favors, p. 53), (2) how Navajos are given names (they have at least two, their "true" name, p. 79, and the name(s) they are known by, pp. 111, 230, 238), (3) why it is rude to call someone "brother-in-law" and the importance of clan moieties to incest taboo (Navajo kinship is matrilinear and men and women of the same clan can neither touch nor marry, pp. 39, 234-35). These illustrations enable the reader to see the joke in teaching innocent foreigners (read, Americans) to say "brother-in-law" (p. 21) or to understand the tragic irony in the sorrow of Laughing Boy's best friend. The effect of these examples is more than eliciting reader credulity; rather, the effect is eliciting reader understanding and is thus more than simply fulfilling reader expectations.

Laughing Boy would fail as a novel if it were not for LaFarge's explanations of the two languages. Nowhere are these differences more integral to the story than those passages which explore and dramatize why Laughing Boy's marriage to Slim Girl is tenuous and why she must die. Very simply, the marriage is frowned on because Slim Girl has "two faces and two tongues . . . inside is American badness" (p. 68). She was taken to boarding school in California where, as she tells Laughing Boy, she learned the language:

> It is not hard [to learn English]; we had to learn it. They put me in a room with a Ute girl and a Moqui and a Comanche; all we could do was learn English. Sometimes some Navajo girls sneaked out and talked together, but not often. They did not want us to be Indians . . . If ever they come to take a child of ours to school, kill her." (p. 78)

Through Slim Girl's words, LaFarge explains why a boarding school Indian is no longer "of the People" and so is "dead." For Slim Girl the death becomes literal as well as metaphorical. But before she is shot and killed, she says "the Jesus trail seemed to be a lie" and describes the hypocrisy of the preacher she had lived with (pp 257-261). Her literal death, then, is as inevitable as it is tinged with tragic irony.

The reader of Laughing Boy must understand the contrasts between the two languages, and the cultures of which they are part, or else the novel would have almost no meaning. This understanding is different from that required of the reader of Mockingbird which would have meaning without the use of dialect. Analyses of language in the two novels are important to students of rural education because they emphasize the several layers of cultural meaning embedded in being able to "talk the lingo." Without such an ability, the rural educator tends to remain an outsider and so is ineffectual.

The Land and the Family

Just as there is a diversity of dialects and language systems in the United States, so there is a diversity of perceptions concerning the land

and the family. All reasearchers in rural education and rural sociologists such as William Smith, Jr., (1981) have found repeated instances of rural people's ties to their families and to the land. Coles (1977), for example, notes that even when rural families move back and forth, up and down, and across the country, they still retain affiliations with their kin "back home" and still dream of returning to the soil. There is a natural, rather than artificial, rhythm to the ties of kin and soil. This rhythm can produce different time perceptions from those of city-dwellers. For example, those who keep cows or tend sheep adjust their lives around milking or lambing time and so have a biological rather than a mechanistic clockwork rhythm to their lives. Family ties to are governed by kinship, and families are often perceived in terms of genetic traits such as hair color, body type, or even personality.

Although both novels illustrate the importance of land and family, these ties are more important to the intricacies of plot in Mockingbird than they are to those in Laughing Boy. This is not to say that the land and the family are unimportant to Laughing Boy, but in that novel these concepts are virtually givens. They set a background of matrilinearity and a landscape for the straightforward, tragic plot. By contrast, considerations of family and land in Mockingbird deliver an increasing depth of texture to the plot; without such textural details Mockingbird's plot would not "work." Thus, where linguistic considerations were ancillary to Harper Lee's story and integral to that of Oliver LaFarge, the situation is reversed for considerations of land and family. These concepts, then, are integral for Mockingbird, but, if not ancillary to Laughing Boy, they are at least relatively less important.

In Mockingbird, readers learn that there is something of a "caste" system to the social structure. Rural families with "background" (i.e., social posi-

tion) have held land for generations, and whether the family makes money from the land or hasn't a dime to its name is less important to their place in the social structure than the fact that they are landed. As Scout explains very early in the novel: although "the disturbance between the North and the South . . . left descendants stripped of everything but their land, yet the tradition of living on the land remained unbroken until well into the twentieth century" (p. 10).

Prideful country folk, the Cunninghams of Old Sarum for example, live on their land and from it; they eat and pay their bills with goods and services garnered from their land. The Cunninghams, then, are a notch higher in Maycomb country's social structure than either the Negroes or the "poh white trash" Ewells. This is to say that even though the blacks may have been at the bottom of the political system during the Depression years in the Deep South, they seem to rank higher than the Ewells in the social structure, for Scout at least. She describes the black settlement, for example, in terms of its neat and snug cabins from which come delicious smells of fried chicken and bacon or stewing squirrel, possum, or rabbit (p. 158). The Ewells live in an abandoned-by-Negroes, ramshackle cabin behind the town garbage dump. They are scavenging squatters who live in filth and who also have lived off welfare checks for approximately three generations and thus are not subject to the vagaries of changing economics (p. 157). The Ewells are white trash whose position in the social structure seems bottommost. In essence, Mockingbird reveals that the longer a family squatted on a piece of land, the finer it was (p. 122).

Within this hierarchy, however, wer other distinctions which were based on family resemblances, but not necessarily genetic physical resemblances. As readers we learn, for example, that few outsiders came to live in Maycomb County, and when they did they

> caused only a ripple in the quiet stream of family resemblance. . . . [People] took for granted attitudes, character shadings, even gestures. . . . Thus the dicta No Crawford Minds His Own Business, Every Third Merriweather Is Morbid, The Truth Is Not in the Delafields, All The Bufords Walk Like That. (p. 123)

Such details lead the reader to understand why the novel's characters behave as they do. One understands, for example, why Alabama women could not serve on juries, why a Cunningham nearly "hung" the jury in the court proceedings, why Miss Stephanie Crawford was the town scourge, or even why in part Scout's first-grade teacher was less than effective.

Yet it is not just land that gives "background" to a Southern family. The entire social structure of Maycomb County, Alabama, falls neatly into place in two passages that occur late in the novel. The first passage is delivered by Scout's brother Jem (pp. 206-207) who lists the four categories of county folk as: (1) "ordinary like us," (2) the Cunninghams in the woods, (3) the Ewells down at the dump, and (4) the Negroes. Jem classifies the Negroes at the bottom of the hierarchy because that is their position in the political system, and the reason for the guilty verdict in the court trial. Nonetheless, the point Jem makes in his perception of the socio-political hierarchy is that "background" doesn't mean Old Family (read, landed) so much as it means how long a family has been literate - the longer, the finer.

The second passage provides textural details about the "background" of those families who, for Jem, are "ordinary like us," and who, like the Finches, have been literate for generations. Miss Maudie, a family friend, explains that <u>we</u> trusted Atticus to do what was right in defending the black man of rape charges. To the question, Who's WE?, she responds: "The handful of people in this town who say that fair play is not marked White Only; the handful of people who say a fair trial is for everybody, not just us; . . .

the handful of people in this town with background, that's who they are" (p. 216).

In all, Mockingbird amply illustrates the intricacies of land and family ties to a rural region in the Deep South. A family attains social position when it is landed, when it is and has been literate, and when it demonstrates a keen sense of justice - in that order.

By contrast, considerations of land and family in Laughing Boy are broadly sketched. La Farge provides enough details of Navajo social structure to set the stage for the plot and to compare the society of one culture to the society of another. The reader needs only a general idea of matrilinearity to understand, for example, the joke behind teaching a white to say "brother-in-law," only a general idea of the extended (rather than the nuclear) family to understand why Laughing Boy's uncle's admonitions concerning Slim Girl carry influence, only a general notion of clan to understand the incest taboo. Mainly, LaFarge's purpose seems to be that of presenting enough details about the Navajo conceptions of land and family for the reader to infer the differences between the sometimes hypocritical white social structure, especially in terms of its religious and moral tenets, and the Navajo straightforwardness toward hozoji or Trail of Beauty. Thus it is the contrast of two social structures in two different cultures, of necessity broadly sketched, that is important to Laughing Boy and not the intricacies within a single social structure that are detailed in Mockingbird.

It is clear, however, that there is diversity in notions of land and family in these rural novels. Although the generic concepts of land and family exert considerable pull on the rural peoples of all geographic regions, the ways in which the pull is exerted are diverse. The novels demonstrate that while family ties are close, they are also different. Harper Lee drama-

tizes the nuclear family, whereas Oliver LaFarge illustrates differences not only between nuclear and extended families, but also between matrilinear and patrilinear descent systems. Laughing Boy presents a comparative background about family and land so that the classical plot can unfold, whereas Mockingbird delineates the details of family and land so that the intricacies of the plot can be advanced. Yet rural educators need to be aware of the diversity and the complexity of social structures in different rural regions. Otherwise they risk superimposing one structure on another in ways that neither fit nor succeed.

The Schooling

The history of rural education in the United States can be written from two main sources of data. The first source is composed of those primary data found in state legislation, actual school records (e.g., financial expenditures), and proceedings of the Department of Rural Education, National Education Association (NEA).[4] The second source is composed of secondary material which, in effect, summarizes and interprets primary data. These appraisals may be found in such works as are edited by Jonathan Sher (1977, 1981) and William Smith Jr (1981) and articles in the professional journals. Similarly, the history of Navajo Education in the United States can be written from sources using both primary and secondary materials. Primary data about the Navajo exist as federal legislation and commission reports (e.g., The Meriam Report, 1928). Secondary appraisals are found in studies such as L. M. Coombs, Doorway to the Light (1962) and in such wide-ranging journals as Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, Journal of Adult Education, Business Education World. To read these sources is, frankly, to become angry at the arrogance of those who would insist that one educational structure and one set of values can serve all rural peoples including Native Americans. One theme shouts from these pages: civilize all these peoples, regardless of their languages and regardless of their culture, in the way of Conventional Wisdom. Unfortunately, the wisdom

was more conforming than wise.

For Rosenfeld and Sher (1977), the history of rural education may be divided into five eras. The first, from 1840-1870, saw the rise of industrialization, the beginning of urbanization, and the push for centralized districting.[5] The second era, from 1870-1895, heard the spreading "gospel of urbanization" wherein education became the legitimate function of the state, and professionalism became required for a career in the field. The third era, from 1896-1920, found urbanization to have come of age, and consolidation, enforced by busing, became the order of the day. The fourth era, 1920-44, is the critical period for the present investigation; these years are those of "conventional wisdom" wherein the focus was on standardization and conformity. The fifth and final era, 1940-70, finds researchers questioning improvement in education as a result of centralization and standardization.

Indian education as a whole can be divided into three historical periods--traditional, transitional, and modern (Shangreaux, 1981). Traditional Indian education took place before reservations were established. The child acquired a set of values by means of a semi-formal system in which the oral tradition was highly individualized so as to show the child his/her place in society and the universe and his/her relationships with the Supreme Being. By the late 1860's, the transitional period began. At this time education by white religious groups sponsored by the federal government sought to Christianize and civilize the Indians from their "barbaric tongues and religions" so as to assimilate them in the name of progress. The boarding school concept exemplifies the late transitional, early-modern period, and this is the historical period most critical to the present study. In boarding schools, Indian children were removed from their own environment, away from parental role models, so as to adapt them for assimilation. In boarding schools the children were not allowed to use their own languages (the boys often reacting by singing "death

songs"). Although Indians resisted, however passively, the tragic impact of the boarding school era is still being felt, even into the modern period when community schools in reservations promote Indian values at the local level. (See also Clarke, 1981.)

These historical appraisals of rural and Indian education are typical of nearly all appraisals. Together they provide a background against which to analyze the novels of Harper Lee and Oliver LaFarge. Mockingbird focuses on the process of rural elementary schooling and the teaching learning situation. Laughing Boy focuses on the results of boarding school education; once a Navajo is subjected to white notions of schooling, that person is an outcast who no longer lives.

Scout Finch's first-grade teacher, Miss Caroline Fisher, is not one of Sher's "Homebody" teacher-types (1981, pp. 66-68). Instead, she is a combination of Sher's other two teacher types, The "Flash in the Pan" and The "Transplant." As the latter, Miss Caroline hails from a county in North Alabama which seceded from Alabama when Alabama seceded from the Union in 1861. As a North Alabamian, she is regarded as a foreigner. She seems out of touch with the dialect of Maycomb County, lower Alabama, when she doesn't quite tumble to the word "cooties" (p. 29). She is out of touch with Maycomb's social structure when she attempts to foist a quarter (for lunch) on young Walter Cunningham, never realizing that she clashes with the dictum, "The Cunninghams DO NOT Accept What They Cannot Return" (pp. 23-24). As a Flash-in-the-Pan Miss Caroline is, at age twenty-one, a college graduate filled with so-called innovative teaching ideas which fail to adapt to local conditions. For example, Miss Caroline cannot cope with Scout who can already read and write (in cursive script). The teacher suggests that Atticus stop "teaching" because he does it all-wrong, and so, in keeping with the educational dogma of the times, Miss Caroline denies the importance of parental influence and a parental role model. It never seems to occur to her

that Scout "picked up" reading from being read to in her father's lap. Nor can she accept Scout's writing cursive script, since students do not learn "writing" till the third grade. Although Scout is herself bright, Miss Caroline cannot adapt and so, in effect, attempts to force Scout into a conformity typical of that historical period. Scout describes her early days in school as an "endless Project that slowly evolved into a Unit, in which miles of construction paper and wax crayon were expended by the State of Alabama in its well-meaning but fruitless efforts to teach me 'Group Dynamics'"(pp. 34-35).

The teaching-learning situation does not improve in the second grade where Flash Cards are employed (p. 57). Mere mention of the term suggests that every second-grade classroom in every county-district of the State used Flash Cards. The third grade is no better. There, a Current Events Class is dictated from the state-level. The purpose of a Current Events Class, in which every "child was to clip an item from a newspaper, absorb its contents, and reveal them to the class" (p. 222), was to encourage good posture, poise, word-consciousness, a strong memory, and the comforts of belonging to "the Group" (p. 222). The Current Events strategy failed because few school children had access to newspapers and, when they did, they often confused advertisements with news items. Thes state of affairs is tragicomic because it is incongruous with the reality of local circumstances. Thus the reader learns the near-tragic folly of imposing a process of conventionalized techniques on a community where those techniques have no basis in local reality.

Laughing Boy focuses on the results of schooling. The reader accepts the death of Slim Girl as the result of white schooling. However, as Laughing Boy tries to restore her to the ways "of the People," the reader also learns something of traditional Navajo education. Coombs (1962) study, for example, states that the Navajo society is adaptable, never static (p. 4). From the Pueblo, the Navajo learned weaving, an art which we as readers see Slim Girl mastering with Laughing Boy's aid and support (pp. 119-120).

From the Spaniards, the Navajo took sheep and horses and based an economy on those animals, a life style that Laughing Boy espouses, and we as readers learn , for example, that he is also referred to as the expert named Horse Trader (pp. 126-127, 230). From the Mexicans, the Navajo learned to work silver. Laughing Boy is himself a silversmith who crafts bracelets, bow-guards for the arm, and belt buckles.

Slim Girl's weaving and Laughing Boy's silversmithing are important to the story line of the novel, for in designing their respective wares, they refuse to conform to white stereotypes (and so must suffer). LaFarge describes the designs in these words:

> If she had been willing to weave the entirely un-Indian pictures of so many actual objects that so many tourists demanded, she could have had all the work she could handle at fancy prices; but she refused to do anything, or use any colours not purely Navajo, and she strengthened her husband in his natural reluctance to stamp shapeless strings of swastikas, thunder-birds, and other curiosities on his silver (p. 208).

In describing these artistic creations, LaFarge establishes a metaphorical link with traditional Navajo education. The goal of that education is unmistakably clear - hozoji, the Trail of Beauty. For the Navajo, white schooling produces aimlessness and confusion (Case, 1971). Attempts to centralize schooling on reservations or in boarding school, to consolidate schooling on an alien model which again denies the importance of parental influence and parental role models, and to standardize schooling so as to "civilize the barbarians" do nothing more than remove a clear goal and replace it with no goal at all. (These attempts also constitute cultural determinism in the most negative extreme.) The results, in Laughing Boy, are dissonance, dislocatedness, and tragic death.

Schooling, then, in both Mockingbird and Laughing Boy is a dissonant

process and product. Schooling admits nothing of local circumstance and, consequently, arrives at no resolution. Schooling also produces dislocatedness and alienation for Scout and her teachers and for Slim Girl and her people. Finally, schooling produces tragedy - in Laughing Boy, the death of the schooled one, and in Mockingbird, a laughter that comes close to tears.

Findings, Conclusions and Discussion

Investigations of research in rural and Navajo education combine with analyses of the novels Mockingbird and Laughing Boy to indicate three major findings:

1. Since language and culture are interrelated, linguistic considerations of dialect and language are paramount for understanding regional novels and whatever educational setting they portray.

2. Neither researchers nor regional novelists can ignore cultural mores regarding the land and the family.

3. Schooling must coincide with regional and/or cultural education lest it violate the community of which it is part and so produce untoward results for human life.

These findings add up to one inescapable conclusion: No one educational model is appropriate for the diversity of regions, peoples, and cultures of the United States. Attempts to superimpose a single model on such diversity denies the human condition. Furthermore, this statement holds whether one conducts or reviews scientific investigation or one analyzes regional novels. Artistic approaches to qualitative analysis, then, are as valid in their way as scientific approaches are in theirs. Together, these two approaches achieve the depth of understanding inherent in Eisner's (1981) term, binocular vision.

Analyzing regional novels such as those in this study demonstrates the importance of diversity or pluralism in the concept of rurality. Harper Lee's novel of the Deep South illustrates one definition of rurality. Future researchers might examine other regional novels such as those by Edith Wharton

of New England, Sinclair Lewis of the upper Midwest, or Ivan Doig of the Pacific Northwest. Similarly, Oliver LaFarge's novel of the Navajo is an attempt to define Navajo culture as it clashes with a stereotypical white culture. Future researchers might examine the novels of contemporary novelist Scott Momaday,

Incorporating rural novels into undergraduate or graduate level courses in sociological foundations of education, for example, can be accomplished in at least two ways. First, the instructor might simply list some rural novels on a bibliography and encourage students to sample them. A corollary to this strategy might require students to write a critical review essay on a rural novel of their own choosing. My own experience with using novels in undergraduate and graduate level courses in education has been rewarding, for not only does student writing improve as a result of their reading artistic prose but also their understanding of basic concepts becomes increasingly more profound.

Another way of utilizing novels in education courses is for the instructor to require a class to read a rural novel in common. Then, either by additional class readings or by lecture, compare and contrast concepts from the novel with concepts gained from reading research studies on rural education such as those cited here. This strategy is the methodology of the present study. My experience with using this instructional strategy in the undergraduate or graduate classroom has also been rewarding. Student evaluations repeatedly cluster around the idea that reading a novel lets you know, and fast, what education is like in that setting. Additionally, the process of pitting empirically derived results against artistically derived results almost always produces student awareness of and tolerance for differing points of view.

Using novels for educational research is hardly new. Graduate theses in rural and Indian education might follow examples of those in higher education, a field of study which has produced nearly fifty dissertations concerned either

with the image of the professor in American fiction (e.g., King, 1970; Loberger, 1973) or with facets of organizational behavior in narratives (e.g., Walsh, 1976).

Rich sources for investigation also occur in the published proceedings of educational associations and conferences. To compare and contrast these data with the data of regional novels is likely to prove rewarding. Because the present study is exploratory in that it skims over surface information from proceedings, it does little more than suggest the wealth of material to be found there. Nonetheless, researchers might derive insight from comparing these sets of primary sources.

Regional novels speak to the concept of diversity in rural education as it applies to language and dialect, to relationships of rural people to the land and family, and to the arrogance of imposing a centralized and standardized educational model on a rural educational system. Inasmuch as findings derived from analyzing regional novels corroborate and underscore the findings from empirically derived research investigations, there is every reason to believe that further analyses of regional novels will be fully an enlightening. Artistic and scientific investigations are different. The one is neither inferior nor superior to the other. Yet they ask different kinds of questions which, in turn, generate different answers. These different answers constitute different ways of knowing. The multiplicity of answers gleaned from artistic and scientific investigations provides for deeper insights. Thus, one reads empirical studies of rural and Indian education for one way of knowing and one reads regional novels of rural and Indian peoples for another way of knowing about the same thing One comes away from these readings with a more profound and more integrated understanding of the whole.

Notes

[1]I use the term schooling to mean education in a formally organized setting. Schooling is but one part of education and it is to be distinguished from education in the broad sense, including the informal.

[2]Learning a dialect is usually a simple substitution of vocabulary: pail-bucket, frying pan-skillet, soda pop-tonic. Learning a non-IndoEuropean language such as Hebrew, Burmese, or Navajo requires, (of the native speaker of French, German, English and the like) an entirely different syntactic form in which neither inflections (e.g., the -ed affix to a verb to indicate past tense) nor word-order tell "who is doing what to whom, when."

[3]It is of no small importance to realize that Native Americans do not represent one monolithic cultural system. There are several tribes, some with clans and some without. Each tribe has its own culture and language, and even within tribal or regional bounds are different kinship systems and different languages.

[4]I am indebted to Courtland Ofelt, a doctoral student in education at Montana State University, for foraging through the university library to find several sources of primary data (e.g., for this study, volumes 56-80, 1918-42, of NEA proceedings) in rural and Navajo education.

[5]Districting followed two patterns. The term "district" was used in the Northeast and referred to townships, while in the South and West a district meant a "county," the actual term used. See also Baylor (1919) and Williams (1929).

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